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THE WORLD ABOVE

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The World Above

The World Above

A Duologue *by*
Martha Foote Crow

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Of this first edition of The World Above there have been printed five hundred copies on Van Gelder hand-made paper and twenty-five copies on Japan vellum, of which this is number 171

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THE WORLD ABOVE.

The scene is laid in a shadowy and mystic place known to the dwellers there as The Darker Realm. It has been built and burrowed from time immemorial far down underneath some great, beautiful, sunny, human metropolis, called The World Above, but of this light-crowned city those who inhabit the subterranean retreats of The Darker Realm know but little, of its happy days and doings they can but dream.

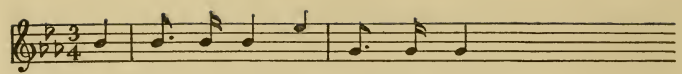
The galleries of The Darker Realm are like an interminable network—one could so easily be lost there! Some parts are new and are built up smoothly with polished stone; other parts are old—so old and irregular that it seems as if they must have been set there many, many centuries ago. Perhaps the place has been an ancient mine where dim-eyed people sought the turquoise gem for their devil-altars; perhaps it was once a human town over which volcanic ashes and desert sands have fallen and drifted for many a long century. Unexhumed and rediscovered, it lies there, and the dwellers in The World Above find use for the water-way conduits that thread its interminable passages.

There are two persons in the story: Jean, a young man, a workman in The Darker Realm, and Angelica, a young maiden, daughter of another workman in the same.

Scene I.

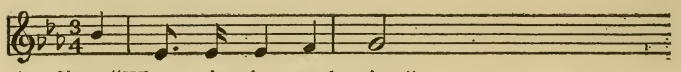
(A place in The Darker Realm. The background forms a cave-like enclosure or gallery with an arched roof composed of massive blocks of fitted stone. At the center of the enclosure is a tall well-sweep with other gigantic structures. Chains and tubes range along the walls and ceiling. At the right there is an opening into one of the larger conduits, and over the opening a trap-door is held up diagonally by a long dusty rope with a pulley attaching it to the wall above. From above this opening dangles a cord that floats out tensely, showing that a strong current of air is coming down through the conduit and is flowing out into the gallery. Near the front a foot-bridge crosses a gulley in the floor of the passage; one can see the glint of the water flowing below. At the left, high up on the wall, juts forth a crane and on this hangs an iron lantern from which a sickly light is given forth. This is almost the only center of light in the place, though it is possible to see that there is some kind of a lamp beyond the half-open door of a windowless hut which is dimly perceived at the back of the gallery. Also, above the foot-bridge, there is a flue in the ceiling, and through this flows downward a faint, pale light, almost imperceptible, like the dimmest twilight. At the back of the gallery, arched openings on either side lead to passages of impenetrable blackness.

From the door of the hut a young girl emerges and passes across the gallery. She hums a strain of the hymn Varina, and as she comes along, she touches the wall lightly with her white finger tips and walks with a hesitating step as if the floor were slippery, or as if she were accustomed to find her way more by the sense of touch than by that of sight. She is a slender and delicate looking girl, and the pupils of her eyes are large and dark as if they were trying to gather all the light they could. Her garment is a poor, dull-colored thing, and her face and her two hands are the only spots of pure white in the whole picture. She comes forward slowly, touching the wall sensitively and sings, as she approaches, in a voice like a soft, sweet flute, and yet more pathetic than any words can describe.)



Angelica—"There is a land of pure de - light,"—

(She comes forward to the bridge and looks down into the water.)

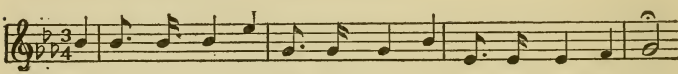


Angelica—"Where saints immortal reign;"

(She looks up toward the flue; the dim radiance there falls like a halo upon her head. She whispers:)

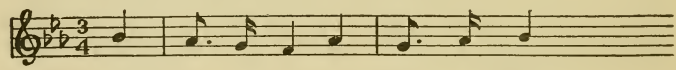
Angelica—"Saints immortal!" I wonder what "saints immortal" may be!

(She looks around wonderingly and then looks down at her hand and turns a ring upon her finger, and then holds it up to the pale light from above, and smiles as she sings the second line of the stanza.)



Angelica—"Infinite day excludes the night, and pleasures banish pain."

(Then she turns and takes in long breaths of the air from the fresh current, lifting her shoulders as if she enjoyed the mere pleasure of breathing.)



Angelica—"There ev - er - last - ing spring a - bides,"

(She rests her face upon her hand meditatively.)

Angelica—This air—it must be the "everlasting spring" that mother sings about, it is so sweet!—for when I ask mother what "spring" is, she says it is where the air is fresh and sweet. Ah, yes! I would rather be out here, rather than in the close room, since mother is so sad and will not talk with me. Here the air comes rushing down the conduit and pours out into the gallery and fills me with such joy that I can scarcely breathe enough of it! I breathe and breathe it in! But—(she stops, listening, and holds her hand to her heart) surely, surely that is Jean's step! It comes nearer! It turns down the Branch of Blind Alleys. It is, it is! Jean! Jean! (Then with an effort to gain composure of tone—) Why, Jean, is that

you? (A boyish-looking fellow comes forward; he is dressed in workman's clothes and has all the marks of sordid labor upon his frame. His body is muscular but his complexion shows the pallor that suggests the cellar-grown plant. His eyes glow, however, with happy expectancy as he moves swiftly toward Angelica and takes her hands in his.)

Jean—Angelica! Do not pretend you did not hear my step; I saw you listening. I could tell from the very Court of Miracles what you were thinking of if I saw only the bend of your head! But look you! I am here! Jean! It is Jean!

Angelica—I know. (She turns and seems to make up her mind to throw all ruse aside; with a gesture of welcome she cries:) Ah, I thought I was never to see you again!

Jean—I thought so, too. I have wished to see you!

Angelica—Why, then, were you so long?

Jean—I was working with old Jacques over in the Old Freestone Branch beyond the Court of Miracles.

Angelica—(She shudders.) The Old Freestone? O, why did you go there?

Jean—Some one must go, Angelica, and I was the youngest and strongest. If I had not gone, old Jacques would have had to as he was the only one that understood the buttressing of the ancient wall, and I wouldn't have had old Jacques made to go for worlds!

Angelica—No indeed, old Jacques that saved your life and pulled you out of the Great River!

Jean—Yes, dear old fellow! And it's dangerous over there. You know they made the walls of the Old Freestone Branch out of blocks of stone so large that when a break starts and they begin to fall, it is not safe to be working among them.

Angelica—Yes, I know; Didon was lost there Ah, poor Didon!

Jean—Yes, alas! But do not think of Didon; think of me! I am here again! I came to see you!

Angelica—But not for so long, for so long! And all the time I feared and wondered what I should do if you should fall from a bridge into the water, or should be caught beneath a break, or should have illness, or should get drawn into the quicksands.

Jean—Ah, do not think of these things! Think only of the pleasant side! Think that we are together!

Angelica—But how can I think of this when I remember that any moment you may be snatched away from me and I never see you again! Do you not remember how when a stone in the wall crumbled away and a rivulet burst into the new tunnel that the Triangle Branch men were working on, and you with them, how the rivulet all in a moment swelled into a stream that rushed forward with a roar we could hear away here, and how it tore down walls and bridges and air flues in its course, and how you nearly got caught in it? You barely escaped, Jean!

Jean—Yes, I know it, Angelica.

Angelica—And ah, if you should fall beneath a break, or get caught in a quicksand, if you should leave us quite alone, mother and me! Wild terror comes over me every time I try to think it out.

Jean—Do not try to think it out, dear Angelica. Put your hand on my arm. Feel how strong it is! I shall work for you.

Angelica—Now that father is gone, I may need to have you work for me.

Jean—Your father gone? Where?

Angelica—Three days now he has not come home.

Jean—But he will surely come.

Angelica—Yes, if he be not caught in a break!

Jean—Well, if he comes not, I shall still be here, strong and loving.

Angelica—(Timidly) Loving?

Jean—Yes, loving; why not? Have I not always been loving? From the first day I ever came into the Great River Branch and pushed my tool-cart along with old Jacques and saw you sitting there on the doorstep of your hut, saw you there but a minute when your mother called you in because she heard strange voices outside and the jingle of tools,—from that day have I not loved you and thought of you as my most sacred dream?

Angelica—(Clasping her hands) Have you, oh have you? Have I been to you like a dream?

Jean—And did you not think of me at all? Do you you not remember that day too?

Angelica—I do not remember that day, I think, but I remember other days. I remember when we played together down where the Branch of Blind Alleys juts into the Great River Gallery. I had caught a little lizard and kept it to play with and called it Prince, and along came

Didon, heedless, cruel Didon, and he gave my poor Prince one knock on the head. What is a lizard? he cried, and you—do you remember what you did?

Jean—Well, what I did was to give Didon a good thrashing. I beat him well and he deserved it.

Angelica—(Sighing) Ah, poor Didon!

Jean—Do not say "poor Didon."

Angelica—But alas, he suffered and lost his life in the War, and all because of my Prince, my poor little dead lizard. Yes, that was really the cause of the war, wasn't it? The Blind Alley men taking up my side and the Triangle men and the Great River men on his, and then the fight going on and taking in other Branches besides.

Jean—So we got tired of the lizard-play!

Angelica—We did indeed.

Jean—Yet it was good play while it lasted, wasn't it?

Angelica—Yes, it was good play while it lasted, but I have noticed that the things we play with get so after awhile that we do not care to play with them anymore. Have you noticed that?

Jean—No, I never did; but then, you are the great noticer.

Angelica—But I think you are!

Jean—Well, out of our lizard-play came the war, which went on— —

Angelica—Until the Break!

Jean—Yes, the Great Break when the wall fell in and poor Didon was crushed under the toppled masonwork.

Angelica—That made all our wars seem useless and small, didn't it? But do you think that the great pressure of the crowd of boys and men from the Branch of Blind Alleys that took up your side and fought with Didon's crew, made the gallery wall cave in? Or did it just cave in of itself?

Jean—How can I tell? It may have been either, or both. The walls are always falling in the Old Freestone galleries.

Angelica—It is this never knowing the causes of things that worries me! Now when the water began to flow right in to the top of the Main Cross Tunnel and all the men were so frightened by that, as if the whole Darker Realm were to come to an end, why were they so much more frightened than usual? And I overheard them

talking about a diver going down from above. Now if a diver was to go down from above to stop the hole, where was he to dive from?

Jean—O, the explanation of all that is easy enough. I think there must have been a river above there and a bridge.

Angelica—A bridge? (in astonishment) a bridge above there? A bridge like this one I am standing on? Are there bridges above us? Is there a world above with bridges and galleries and air-conduits and lizards and lizard-wars and — and breaks?

Jean—(Laughing) O no! I am certain that if there were a world above, there wouldn't be any wars and breaks in it!

Angelica—I am sure I don't see how you know that. You can't imagine anything else for the people to do but roll tool-cars, clean pipes, and repair breaks, can you?

Jean—I can't imagine it, no; but I am sure if there were a world above it would not be so sad and dark as this.

Angelica—Dark? What does that mean?

Jean—Isn't this The Darker Realm?

Angelica—Oh! I see! And yet I am not sure that I *do* see!

Jean—Why, dark is everything that isn't light, everything that isn't lamps and cressets, everything that isn't your face, everything that isn't you! If there'd been a world above, you'd have been in it, not here!

Angelica—(With enthusiasm) Ah, I wish I had!

Jean—(In a surly voice) I don't.

Angelica—Why not?

Jean—Because I want you here—here with me!

Angelica—Oh, yes, that!—but if we both could go to The World Above?

Jean—Don't talk such nonsense; of course there isn't any such thing, and what's the use of bothering our heads with puzzling and wondering?

Angelica—Yes, that's just it, wondering! I can't help wondering. There's something in my head that goes on wondering and wondering. My wondering-machine will keep going, and I cannot stop it. It makes me very unhappy and yet I do not wholly want it to stand still. Now, I can't help wondering what these fearful things mean, these breaks. Do you never wonder?

Jean—Wonder? No. I wonder at nothing. I don't see anything to wonder at.

Angelica—Now, I wonder all the time. I want to know the meanings of things. What makes this water flow, what makes the lamp burn, who made this cloth of my dress, these walls and foot-paths, the cressets and windlasses and charcoal-burners. I asked mother if she made the cloth and she said "no." I said, "who did?" She said, "how should I know?" I said, "where did it come from?" She said, "Father brought it." "Where did he get it," I said. She said, "I didn't ask him,"—and not a word more would she say. Where do my dresses come from, this cloth-stuff, do you know? Do they not come from The World Above?

Jean—Why, no. They just come from your mother. She sews them for you. And the stone in your precious ring, that Jacques calls an opal, do you know where it came from?

Angelica—(Eagerly) From The World Above?

Jean—(Very impatiently) Oh, no! *I* gave it to you. It came from me. I loved you and I gave it to you.

Angelica—But where did *you* get it?

Jean—I found it in the Court of Miracles at the edge of the Great Pool, of course, where we are always finding things. We never found anything that was not found there, of course, for that is the Great Place-of-Finding-Things.

Angelica—Do you believe that?

Jean Believe what? That this is the Great Place-of-Finding-Things? Why, of course! How can you keep from believing what you feel with your very own hands and hear with your own ears? When I took hold of the scoop something slipped over the handle and I felt a little knob-like thing go between my fingers. I caught at it and cleaned away what was tangled around it and gave it to you.

Angelica—And I washed it and washed it and washed it, and made it clean, quite clean, and lo, it was a ring just right for my finger, for my finger, finger, finger! (She flourishes her hand joyously with the ring upon it.)

Jean—Let me see it again; let me take it and look at it.

Angelica—Oh, you cannot take it! I cannot be without it one moment, I love it so.

Jean—But let me, me only, look at it one moment. (He snatches at her hand and draws it to him and kisses it impulsively.)

Angelica—I thought you wanted to look at the ring!

Jean—I forget the ring when I think of you, dearest Angelica. Can't you forgive that? Can't you? Can't you?

Angelica—I would try, perhaps; but now, look at it! look! (She holds up the ring to the lamp's light.) See the wonders in it?

Jean—I see no wonders; it is just a little round drop of dull white set on a band of gold.

Angelica—Little round drop of dull white indeed! See there! See there! Do you not see a streak of something, like the pain that now and then shoots down through one's shoulders?

Jean—No, there is no streak in it.

Angelica—But now, *now*, see it! Try it in this light, in this pale, pure light that shines down through the flue from above.

Jean—Ah, yes, I do see it now; now that you hold it in the light of the flue, I see it; now, a darting of red!

Angelica—Of red? What is red?

Jean—O wonderful eyes!—Don't you know that red is a color?

Angelica—A color? What is a color?

Jean—Why, a color is—is, well, for instance, red; look at it!—*that* is a color.

Angelica—But it changes. Is that, now—see!—is that a color too? Can you not catch the other dartings?

Jean—Yes, I see; that is blue; yes, that is a color, too. Now I can see yellow, orange and purple; these are the colors; all the colors there are, are here.

Angelica—How do you know, now, that they are all the colors there are?

Jean—I know because these are all the colors I have ever seen, and of course, then, they are all there are.

Angelica—But how did they come there? What put the dartings in there? What are they for?

Jean—Come there? What for? What silly questions! Why, this is an opal, and it is the nature of opals to have these colors in them and to dart about in this way.

Angelica—And are these beautiful colors to be seen only in the opal?

Jean—Of course, where else should one see them? Did you ever see them anywhere else, child?

Angelica—No, I never did, but I thought perhaps you might, since you have traveled so far, so far beyond the Great Cloaca Branch and the Branch of Blind Alleys

and even beyond the Great Cross. (She holds the opal in the light and turns and turns it.) It seems to me that I dimly perceive other dartings than these you have named, although perhaps I am mistaken. But it is very beautiful and I love it. (A pause.) Well, well, it is all a mystery, I see I must have a new pair of eyes or a new sense of some kind to know all about this wonderful thing you call color. (Brightening) But I know I shall have them some day, else why did I get the opal and how was it that I found the shooting, pain-like rays in my opal? Jean, if I had made the world, I would have made it all opals! I wish I *could* make a world! O, but everything should be beautiful if I could make life!

Jean—(Patronizingly and coaxingly) Make life? What do you mean by that?

Angelica—Why, make life, make things and people! Oh, if I could but make things and people!

Jean—I don't see what you could do with them when you made them.

Angelica—Oh, I would have them live and laugh and have lights, lights, all they wanted of lights!

Jean—But what for?

Angelica—Oh, because I love people and I love lights. I could never have too many lights. Oh, how I love them! When I wake up from a long sleep and see that mother has set the lamp a-burning I could shout for joy. Then if I had lights enough, I know I would not have to bring my opal out to the bridge to make it throw forth all its dartings. If I could make a world, I would have things very different from this.

Jean—Should I be there?

Angelica—Oh, yes, you would be there but (with just a little touch of coquetry) I should not pay much attention to you. (Seriously) I should be so busy looking around at all the beautiful opal-colored things. Now for myself I would have a skirt of red and a sacque of blue and the walls of my hut should be covered with red and purple all swaying and melting as in the ring, and I would have the shades that sweep from color to color, the softest for my ceiling and beneath my feet the richest and warmest. Thus should my world have been, had I made the world!

Jean—Do not worry your mind with these visions and wonderings, dearest Angelica. You will become so excited you will be ill, dear.

Angelica—Oh no, I shall not be ill, I shall be well! It makes me almost believe that there is such a world above when I think of how well I could be if I were in it. For, why did I have eyes that long for light, light, more light, if I was never to have more light?

Jean—Dear Angelica! (soothingly.)

Angelica—No, no, do not speak against it! I know there *is* a world above. I know it. I feel it. O, let us go there! Let us go up through this flue and find it!

Jean—Why, Angelica, if there had been such a thing, your mother would have told you and old Jacques would surely have known about it.

Angelica—Then I shall ask mother,—and now! For I feel that I cannot wait; I must know. I shall ask mother; I shall make her tell.

Jean—And shall I go and ask old Jacques?

Angelica—Do you do so, and come to tell me again. Come here in an hour, here to the Bridge. Good bye, Jean! Good bye! We must find The World Above!

(Jean watches Angelica go into the hut and then passes slowly across the gallery and disappears in one of the Blind Alleys.)

Scene II.

(Another part of the Darker Realm. The walls are of long blocks of stone set irregularly together; gigantic fungi grow in distorted protrusions from the interstices, and water drips from their out-reaching fantastic fingers. The blackness of darkness shows in portals opening on various passages. Some disused tool carts and heaps of debris are piled up at the side. A flaming torch in a cresset gives an irregular and eerie light like flashes of blue lightning. The tracks for tool carts pass along the floor of the tunnel. The sound of water flowing in some under-ground channel is heard. Jean and Angelica enter from opposite sides and meet.)

Angelica—O Jean, O Jean! What I have seen! What have I seen!

Jean—What, what? How came you here, Angelica?

Angelica—I was impatient to see you and so I came to meet you and on the way—O, I saw, I saw—what do you think?

Jean—I cannot guess. Here, come and rest yourself; sit here and do not tremble so. (He leads her to a seat on a broken bench.)

Angelica—I saw—(clasping her hands in ecstacy) a saint immortal!

Jean—Saint immortal,—what is that?

Angelica—A saint immortal? Do you not know? Why, that is one of the happy beings that live in the world above! Mother sings about it, you know: "Where saints immortal reign," she sings. That's in the "land of pure delight."

Jean—Dear Angelica! Never mind about that now. Come, rest awhile and get over this excitement. Let us talk about our childhood and the happy days we spent together playing around the well-sweep in the Blind Alleys and the games and that poor Prince and all the —

Angelica—Jean, are you crazy?

Jean—No, (laughing) but I think you are, talking about saints immortal and The World Above and all those impossible dreams of yours.

Angelica—But now, listen! (She lays her hand on his arm.) As I was coming from our hut—have I told you what mother said? and —

Jean—Why, no, you have not yet. I think you were going to, but—tell me about your vision, if you want to, first.

Angelica—And what did old Jacques say? I am sure he said exactly what mother did when I crowded her down to it, that there *is*—

Jean—(Sadly) I couldn't find old Jacques. He may have gone off to your world above, for anything I know (sarcastically).

Angelica—O Jean, do not be so hard of heart! Let me tell you! Do you know, I found mother singing that song she loves so to sing — —

Jean—(Laughing) Well, what has that to do with the matter?

Angelica—Why, it's all about The World Above, the song itself is about that. Listen! (She sings.)

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign.
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain."

And here it is about the "spring." (Sings again).

"There everlasting spring abides,
And never-fading flowers;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours."

Jean—It is a beautiful song, dear.

Angelica—Yes, Jean, (she speaks most solemnly) Mother says there *is* a world above this, that there really is; and now, it may be old Jacques has gone there, and if he has, I am sure I am very glad, for up there everything is beautiful and colored with all the colors in this opal, and everybody is happy there.

Jean—(Very sadly) Angelica, do you really believe all this?

Angelica—I did believe it before, and now I know it.

Jean—And does it make you glad to believe it?

Angelica—Yes (with a long ecstastic breathing); but if you believed it, I should be all the more certain of it, and if the belief made you glad, it would make me all the more glad.

Jean—But why, then, if your mother knew about this, did she not tell you before? Why did she not talk with you about it?

Angelica—Ah, Jean, that was the first thing I said. I don't like to tell you what she answered.

Jean—But tell me; for am I not the same as yourself?

Angelica—She said she had not told me because—because—she was afraid I would fret to go there, and she did not want me to, she wanted me to be content to stay here with her. Besides, she said, it might make me blind to go there—I do not know why. But now father has gone; three days he has been gone; such a thing never happened before, and mother fears he has gone to The World Above and will never come back.

Jean—He will, of course,—unless—unless—a break in some blind alley has caught him!

Angelica—Do not frighten me! That cannot be. I will not believe it. He has gone to The World Above and I am glad he has!

Jean—But now, Angelica, if there were a world above, how did we happen to be in The Darker Realm, instead of in that one? We must have come from that world to this?

Angelica—Oh! Think of that! (She clasps her hands in an ecstacy.) And do you remember ought about it, dear Jean?

Jean—(Very sadly.) I only remember old Jacques.

Angelica—I, at any rate, must have come from some world above, for I think I remember, or rather, I feel dimly a remembering like to a faint breathing as sweet as an—as an "everlasting spring," Jean. (Angelica sits musing and Jean gazes upon her. A pause. Then he says, tenderly:)

Jean—But why don't you tell me what it was you saw?

Angelica—(Starting up again excitedly) O, words could not tell it! Jean, heart of man could not dream of the wonder of it!

Jean—But what was it? What was it, to deserve all this?

Angelica—I'll try to tell. As I came by the Little Cross of Miracles, I looked up through the flue and at the top I saw that there was an opening—an opening out, Jean! At first I could not look, it pierced and pricked my eyes like sharpest knives; but after a while, I had to look; and through the opening I saw a face, a face, Jean!—the face of a maiden like myself, with eyes looking down at me with looks of curiosity, and oh, Jean!—of love; and they shone like lamps! But her hair looked like the gold of my ring, and around her neck her dress was like the red dartings in the opal; and then, oh, she looked down with a gaze that turned from curiosity and love to sorrow and almost to horror! And then she moved back and went away! Yet, as she arose, I saw her form for one brief moment. Her movements were like the shadows of the light upon the water where it flows beneath the bridge by our hut in the Court of Blind Alleys. And all the colors of the opal were upon her and around her, and beyond her a most clear and shining blue, that dazzled and hurt my eyes so that I could not look upon it at all. And I saw a wall, not dark like these around here, but colored like the opal when it is asleep; and there were things like these (laying her hand on one of the outreaching fungi), only finer and all in masses, much more beau-

tiful and of a color like—but I cannot tell you what it was like; it was like nothing that we have here, but it was soft and comforting. I could have looked at it always, and never I am sure would I have had to rest my eyes for aching. (Turning suddenly to Jean) Do you not believe it now?

Jean—What, that this vision of yours was anything but a dream?

Angelica—Yes.

Jean—When you, dear dreamer, are always dreaming?

Angelica—But what, then, was that beautiful creature that I saw above the open trap? Was she not one of the "saints immortal" mother sings about?

Jean—What was it? O, that was a vision, a something that passed across your eye-balls, a sort of defect in your sight.

Angelica—Ah, that will not do, you cannot explain it in that way, you cannot, you cannot!

Jean—Yes, this is how it is. Listen, dear! You know the shadows of the swinging lamp as they reflect on the water and then back on the glass above, make just such strange pictures. We have often watched them together. Don't you remember, dear, once when —

Angelica—But the trap was open and above I saw a sheet of jewel like my ring when I hold it up to the candle, and at the side I saw a wall but clearer and brighter than any wall in all The Darker Realm. It fairly glistened. Tell me, have you never seen such a vision in all your life?

Jean—No, dear Angelica.

Angelica—Nor ever seen any opening above that seemed to lead out into a place far brighter and more beautiful than this?

Jean—No, dearest Angelica.

Angelica—And did you never in all your travels from one part of The Darker Realm to another, did you never find a gallery that seemed to lead outward?

Jean—No, dearest.

Angelica—And did you never have a sort of feeling within that there must be a world above, to account for this in fact,—to account for ourselves if for no other reason?

Jean—What kind of a queer feeling might that be?

Angelica—Well, let me see, how can I tell you! Perhaps something like this. Have you ever lost your way?

Jean—Oh, no, that is, not many times—only once.

Angelica—Well, what did you do?

Jean—I considered.

Angelica—You considered? What good did that do?

Jean—Why, I considered where I was and that I came from the direction I came from, and so I turned and went back in that direction; and when I came to the point where I turned down, then I turned, and when I had gone as far as I did in coming, then I stopped again and considered and decided which way to take, and so I simply decided at each step and pretty soon I was at the Great Cross and then I knew the way like my own fingers.

Angelica—But I, when I was lost, stopped and listened, and in my soul I heard a Voice telling me to go this way to the right, and pretty soon to stop and turn off and so I turned off, and by and by I heard the voice again saying, "stop and turn;" and again, "now to the right" and then; "turn down the little way;" and then at last, "turn by the wheel;" and then I reached the Great Cross; and so I crept along, listening all the way, and at last reached our hut.

Jean—Now what might that Voice be?

Angelica—Jean, I do not know; but I have sometimes thought—don't laugh!—but I have sometimes thought the Voice came from this wonderful ring of mine; at any rate, when I do what the Voice says, the opal glows out so in the dark that I cannot keep from singing.

Jean—But suppose you do not do what the Voice says?

Angelica—Then the ring fades down as if it were disappointed and saddened.

Jean—Angelica, you are a wonderful dreamer. But I don't really see much difference between your way and mine, only that what you call the Voice, I call considering. That's all the difference.

Angelica—O no, but there is a great deal more difference than just that, for I heard other voices too. Do you never hear voices?

Jean—No, never! Never heard a one.

Angelica—Never heard your mother's voice?

Jean—Mother's? No. I was too little when she disappeared anyway; I never knew anything about her.

Angelica—Well, old Jacques, then; he has been like a mother to you. Do you never hear him when you are far away in the galleries and the light has gone out and

you don't know the way—do you never hear him calling, or rather not exactly calling, but sort o' pulling and drawing you in your soul as if you had to move toward him and reach him somehow?

Jean—O, yes, once I remember—when I had to stay all night in the Triangle Branch. I had no cot to lie on but only just a bench and it was very hard and I wanted old Jacques very much and I seemed, I think I seemed to feel—what you call—a "pulling" then. I was very cross I know and I — cried.

Angelica—(Laughing) Of course, for you were a very little boy. It may be you felt a pulling then, but I think (hesitatingly) it was just homesickness,—just homesickness, Jean. (With a long sigh) I am afraid I can't make you understand what I mean by pulling. But (more cheerfully) you'll understand sometime.

Jean—When shall I understand, Angelica?

Angelica—O, when we are in The World Above!

Jean—(Laughing) Angelica, I see there is no use trying to teach you sense!

Angelica—Jean, I see there is no use trying to make you see the truth! And as long as you laugh at me, of course I cannot tell you what I in my inmost soul have thought.

Jean—Come then, (condescendingly,) I will not laugh, dear child!

Angelica—(Pouting) No, that will not do, either!

Jean—How, then?

Angelica—Why, lovingly—(she pauses)

Jean—You did not mean to say that? Then say it now and mean it! Dear one, why be so shy of me? I love you and always have loved you; you know it! You love me,—it must be so. Let us enjoy it. What else have we worth talking of in all The Darker Realm? Come, tell me!

Angelica—Yes, dear Jean, I am listening.

Jean—And with all the loving that lives and burns in me, I will listen to everything you have in your heart. If it is your thought, I love it, no matter what it is.

Angelica—Then listen, listen with the heart! (She seats herself more comfortably by his side and raising her forefinger to enforce what she says, begins.) When I have stood on the bridge in the Center of Blind Alleys and gazed down into the water that flows and flows so black and ceaselessly below, I have seen —

Jean—Well, what then? Some of your visions, with robes of red and hair of gold color, and walls of opal?

Angelica—There, now! You said you would listen believingly!

Jean—I will, I will! My heart is here.

Angelica—But I want head, too.

Jean—Teasingly grasping one! You want too much.

Angelica—With solemnity even this you must give, if you hear my story. I feel that you can not understand my story unless you give both!

Jean—Both, all, anything; they are yours, Angelica! Tell me about these visions upon the flowing water.

Angelica—Shadows seemed to fall there, of all shapes and forms.

Jean—Is that all? And was this puzzling to you? I can explain it all. Now, these shadows were, of course, the reflection from the cresset-light, that fell upon the water and then flew back again to your dear little eyes; that was all. Do you see, dear?

Angelica—But that was not all. There was more of it!

Jean—What, then?

Angelica—Once when I was standing and watching, there came a sudden change; the cresset-light went out! I looked and it was as black on the wall as the quicksand pond in the Court of Miracles. Then I looked down to the water again. The light from the flue came down a little less dimly than it did when the cresset was burning, and in a minute, dearest Jean, the self-same shadows began to flicker and fall and pass like the faint images of many graceful beings moving very swiftly to and fro above. I turned as cold as any stone when I saw this! Aha, that vision you cannot explain!

Jean—But, dear, I can. These were still reflections, the cresset reflections that had been, as it were, left over. They were tossed down to the moving water, from the water they were tossed up into the flue, and when the light in the cresset went out, these that were stored in the flue had still to fall.

Angelica—But this went on and on; this kept going on!

Jean—Then there were a great many left over to fall, a sort of accumulation of them.

Angelica—That sounds well, and it may be so, yet it does not fully satisfy me. And there is something else!

Jean—More wonders?

Angelica—Yes; listen with heart and head; you know you promised.

Jean—I will keep my promise, dear love.

Angelica—You hear this roar?

Jean—Of course, the water in the Great River, you mean?

Angelica—Yes, Jean. (She draws nearer and speaks very low) Jean, I have heard another roar!

Jean—Then there I am with you. I have, too; in fact, I have heard many kinds of roars. The river has a very different sound from the Chain Tube and the Chain Tube from the conduit in the Rubble Corridor and each air-passage has a sound of its own. Of course you could not be expected to have learned this, but they are common facts known to all that study into the laws and systems of The Darker Realm in which we live.

Angelica—Yes, I, too, have ears and I know all the tones and voices of all the conduits that pass through this part of The Darker Realm. But this roar that I mean is different from them all. It is as different as your voice is from mine. It is more dim and fine than any common roar; yet there are many, many tones mingled in it—oh, more than you could ever count! And they are different kinds of sounds, yet all blending into one. O, it stands alone, it is quite unlike any other sound in all our galleries. And when I stand on the bridge by the door of the air-conduit, and drink in the good air that makes me feel strong and that mother says I must breathe all I can of because what she calls "everlasting spring" abides in it, then it is I hear it. But I do not always hear it even there. It has times and seasons. Sometimes it twines in with the roar in the air-conduit and sometimes not. I can now almost tell when it will begin and when it will end. But, Jean, the strange thing about it is this: when I go away from the sound of the water in the Great River, this roar grows more clear; in fact, the farther I go, the more plainly I hear this strange spirit-like, tumultuous, sound. Therefore, it cannot be the rushing of the water or of the air that causes it. It is something quite distinct and unaccounted for by anything in our Realm. You can say nothing to this!

Jean—(Sadly) Nothing, dear, except that I have not the fine sense that sees all this and therefore I cannot dream your dreams with you. But if you believe them and they make you happy, I am glad for you.

Angelica—But tell me, have you never seen one single vision? Nor heard the soft-sounding roar from above? Nor caught a glimpse of the shadows in the dim radiance of the flue?

Jean—No, no, none of all these things.

Angelica—And when you have looked down from the bridge into the aqueduct and have seen the water flowing, flowing, have you not asked yourself whence it comes, and whither it is going? And also why it flows,—ever flows? And have you not longed to go on with it and follow it in its current until you found out where it was going to? Following the way the water flows, would not that lead us to some explanation of what it all means?

Jean—But what is the use, beloved Angelica, of our bothering our heads with these questions when it is plainly impossible to find any answers whatever?

Angelica—I cannot help it. I *must* bother my head! O, have you never in all your travels seen anything, anything, like an opening outward?

Jean—No, love; yet that I may not be quite outdone by you in telling about wonders, I will tell you of something that happened to me once, in which I dare say you, if it had happened to you, might have found a dream of The World Above.

Angelica—Ah, tell me, tell me!

Jean—Do not expect too much. It was only this. I remember that once when I was down on what they call the Grand Canal, I there saw something that I at any rate could not understand. I saw a dim light in the center of the tunnel and as I drew nearer it grew greater and greater until it shone so that it seemed to shoot sharp knives into my eyes. I could not bear the pain and so I turned back. You, I suppose, would have rushed forward and gazed upon it and spoiled your eyesight forever and never have been able to see anything in our Darker Realm again.

Angelica—(Excitedly) It was an opening. It was, it was! Lead me there, take me there! O take me there at once!

Jean—It is not for a moment to be thought of! Not for you, dear. It is far away, and the new breaks are all down on that side, and you are not strong enough to attempt it. And you could not look upon it; you know your mother said so. She told you it would make you blind.

Angelica—Ah, I do not care! Let me go! I am strong; let me go! I will risk the eyes!

Jean—If you bid me I will go and see whether I can find it again; but you —

Angelica—Jean, you do not know how strong I am. I have done as mother bade me; I have breathed in the breath of the everlasting spring, and I am strong enough to go. Mother would let me—I would *make* her let me go! And we would then come and tell her! Ah, let me go and see at least if that gallery is still open and if—in case we wished to—we could go by that way to The World Above. Come, come, dear Jean, will you come? (She draws Jean to his feet and pulls him excitedly on.)

Jean—But, Angelica —

Angelica—Come, come! In what direction is it? Only tell me that!

Jean—I have forgotten exactly where it was, but it was down the Grand Canal and beyond the Great Cross; it is likely that it was some strange affliction of my eyes that seized me; only that, dear Angelica!

Angelica—No, no; we must try to find it. We must at least go there and have one look outward. (With determination) Jean, if you do not come with we, I shall go alone, and I shall wander till I find.

Jean—No, no, dear! Never think of doing such a thing!

Angelica—I shall! I am going now! (She flies along the passage, and then stops and gazes back upon Jean. She looks like a spirit shining out in the darkness). Are you coming? I am going on!

Jean—Then go on, Angelica; I will come with you. I am coming, I am coming! (Both figures pass under the arch of masonry fringed with its grotesque fungi, and disappear into the black darkness).

Scene III.

(A spacious gallery in The Darker Realm, where a gateway opens out and lets in a flood of dazzling light. Graceful vines entwine the arch and move quietly in the wind, while beyond the opening spreads the blue and glittering surface of a river. Many gay-colored river-craft ply up and down in the distance, and the varied sounds of city life send a pleasant murmur to the ear. Beyond all are banks of green, church spires, and a strip of sky that is ripening in color toward sunset. Beneath the arch at the right, steps of stone masonry lead down into the waters and disappear in the transparent depths; a stone foot-path leads from the left along the side of the gallery, and the walls are trellised here and there with little trailing fingers of moss. Jean and Angelica enter from the dark gallery and follow along the embanked stone foot-path. Angelica moves as though her physical strength were exhausted while Jean supports her form and seems to urge her forward.)

Jean—Dear Angelica, come but a little farther!

Angelica—I can go no farther; I am breathless; I am faint.

Jean—Ah, yes, bear up, dear; lean on me.

Angelica—My eyes, my eyes!

Jean—Close your eyes for awhile; I will lead you. Then when they are rested, you can open them and look through the gateway. Now we have come so far and suffered so much, you must not lose the sight you have so longed to see.

Angelica—The stones are more slimy, more slippery, at every step.

Jean—But let me lead you; take my hand.

Angelica—(She reaches out uncertainly and instead of touching his hand, touches the masonry of stone.) The wall! (A shudder passes over her.)

Jean—Here, dear! (He clasps her arm and draws her hand away from the wall.)

Angelica—My eyes have prickles in them; I can scarcely see. When I look at that great red eye before us yonder, a thousand points jut out and fly to me and hit me in my eyes.

Jean—But that great red eye must be the opening, dear. That is where we reach The World Above.

Angelica—Then I do not want to reach The World Above, for nothing but pain comes to me from that great red eye.

Jean—But I feel certain that we must go through that opening and when we get there I am sure that we shall scarcely know that we are coming into light. My eyes are quite used to it now, at least so that they do not prickle any more, and I can make out some beautiful things.

Angelica—What? Tell me what, for I shall never see it myself.

Jean—Yes, you will. Believe me, it is only a little further, only a little more weariness and pain and we shall be there. When I saw what you were willing to go through to reach this gateway, what suffering to endure, what dangers to risk, I began to believe with you, and now we have our reward, for here we are with the gate right at hand.

Angelica—But I am too tired!

Jean—Then let us rest here a little before we take the last steps, and let us get our eyes used to the opaline lights. And see, we have much more light now; I can see

you better, and you could see me better if you would but take your hand down from your eyes and look at me. (She slowly looks around and bends her eyes upon him.)

Angelica—I cannot see you at all. Oh, where are you? Have you left me alone?

Jean—No, dear, no! Here I am, by your side.

Angelica—Am I turned blind?

Jean O, no, it was because your eyes had rested for a moment on the light of the gateway and when you turned to me you could not bear the contrast of the darkness. But look and see! In this new light can you not see me better?

Angelica—I—see—you—better. (She slowly draws back with a frightened look in her eyes) I never saw you look like that!

Jean—I never saw you look so beautiful, Angelica.

Angelica—I never saw you look so—like this. O, who is this? Who are you? (almost crying) Where is my Jean?

Jean—Why, what is the matter? I am Jean! Put your hand on my face and you will find that I am Jean, just the same as always. (She lays her delicate hand on his brow and draws it down over his eyes and lips, then draws it away with a long sigh and closes her eyes; he snatches her hand back and kisses it passionately.) Ah, Aho is it now? (breathlessly.) Is it Jean, or is it not Jean?

Angelica—It is Jean that kissed me. It is not Jean that my eyes rest on. Your face has a thousand things in it that I never saw before. There are lines and wrinkles and furrows; there are shadows and shrinkings; there are marks and scars; there are pains and miseries. I did not know you were so sad and burdened and broken-hearted and miserable, and —

Jean—O what, O what?

Angelica—Is there shame? Are you ashamed of something? Have you done something wicked, some dreadful, dreadful wickedness?

Jean—O, when you look at me, Angelica, I am full of shame. I am crushed to the stones with shame. Do not look at me so, I cannot bear it. (He covers his face with his hands).

Angelica—But, yes, I must look at you; I must know this face, sad and furrowed as it is. Take away your hands; let me see your eyes!

Jean—Then see, and I will tell you why your look pains me to the heart and why I cannot lift my eyes to yours. When I was —

Angelica—Hush! (She speaks imperatively and puts her hand over his mouth but he pulls it away.)

Jean—But why? You wanted to know, and now I want to tell you; I will tell you every bad thing I ever did!

Angelica—No, no, no, no! I will not hear! I will stop my ears. I do not want to hear. Not a word, not a word!

Jean—But it is the truth and I want you to know the truth, all the truth.

Angelica—I know the truth, I see the truth in your face, all of the truth that I want to know; I see it in the lines and shadows beneath your eyes.

Jean—But if I do not tell you more, you will find it out yourself and then you will not love me!

Angelica—Telling or not telling will not change my love. I have loved you —

Jean—*Have* loved me! —

Angelica—I have begun to love you. Love for you has begun in my heart, and what is begun must go on. You are you! I see it in the light from the great eye of The World Above, and if you are you, what matters anything you or all the people in The World Above could tell me? You are you, that is enough!

Jean—But is it better to know that I am I, though my face or even the whole of me changes, is it better to know this than to know anything else in the world? Is it better? Is it? O let me hear you say!

Angelica—(She laughs a soft laugh of contentment;) It is so! It is better!

Jean—You are you, and I am I, and we are together, together, together! (She throws her arms around his neck and lets her head rest against his. He draws her close to his side. Then they rest for a long time in quiet and finally she turns and looks again toward the light at the opening of the gallery.)

Angelica—(Whispering.) The light! I cannot look upon it, but I know it is the light!

Jean—(Softly). Yes, dear, it is the light from The World Above, shining in on us as we sit here together.

Angelica—(Whispering.) Together! Shall we be always together?

Jean—Always, dear, so long as you are you and I am I!

Angelica—And shall you be always you?

Jean—Always, dear. I cannot be otherwise than myself, can I? (Laughing a little.)

Angelica—Of course not. I knew that always. I knew that from the beginning.

Jean—No, you didn't; you never knew it till I proved it to you, proved it by the light from The World Above that shone upon our faces.

Angelica—(Laughing joyously.) I cannot tell you anything because you always prove things out, can I?

Jean—(Laughing in his turn.) I cannot tell you anything because you always know without any proving, don't you? But are you ready now to try to reach the gateway? Shall I lift you, dear? Shall we go on?

Angelica—But I am so tired. It was such a long way we came. I would fain stay here always with your arms around me. I do not care if we never reach The World Above!

Jean—But if we go on, you will still have me with you and have The World Above besides!

Angelica—And the light!

Jean—Yes, and the light! You know how you loved that and how you have longed for it.

Angelica—Yet when I look at it I shrink back—if that great eye that shoots out terrors toward me and gives me more pain than joy be really the light I have longed for! Ah, Mother! She said the light of The World Above would blind my eyes. Dear Mother! I want her!

Jean—But if we should try to go back, we could not find our way to her now. We must go on. We will wait till our eyes are a little stronger and can bear the light; for it is the light! It must be, since we have traced it by every trap we have passed. Every one was larger than the one before, you know, but it was always the same thing, always something we knew by our eyes. This one before us is only a light larger and clearer than any of the others; only that, a larger light than a candle, larger than a lantern, larger than any of the traps that let down light from above into The Darker Realm.

Angelica—I am sure it is as you say, dear Jean, and perhaps when we have passed through the gateway and are really in the light, in the light itself, with light, light, light, pouring around us and bathing us on every side —

Jean—Yes, perhaps when we are in the very midst of it, it won't hurt our eyes so much.

Angelica—Beautiful—most beautiful! And perhaps we shall be a part of it, one with it, and responding to it. Then, if that were so, it could not hurt us but we should revel in it, as I being a part of you, dear, take joy in you. Could that be so, do you think?

Jean—When you say it, dearest, I am sure of it, for you yourself are light, you shine so! (embracing her.) May I lift you now and shall we go on? (Jean supports Angelica on his arm and tenderly leads her on. The two approach the steps where they lead down into the water.)

Angelica—Must we go through all this, do you think, before we can be in The World Above?

Jean—I believe so, dearest, yes. Are you not rested a little?

Angelica—O yes, I feel much stronger! And you are with me! That is enough! Hark! Listen, Jean!

Jean—Yes, dearest.

Angelica—I hear voices, happy voices! Ah, beautiful voices! Look, Jean, and tell what it is!

Jean—I see many people; they are coming in boats. They come very near, and they look this way most pleasantly.

Angelica—(Whispering) Are they the "saints immortal"?

Jean—I think they must be, dearest Angelica.

Angelica—Oh, Jean, dearest, dearest Jean! (A pause.) Stay with me, Jean! (She puts one arm about Jean's neck and rests her face down, covering her eyes from the light.)

Jean—Angelica, love, cling to me and I will buoy you and lead you. (They touch their feet to the water's edge.)

Angelica—The water! (She says it breathlessly.) Must we step in?

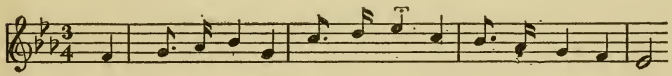
Jean—But look onward, onward, beloved! (They slowly move down the steps into the water. Jean clings to the stone buttress and supports Angelica.)

Angelica—The water is deeper. (She shrinks back terrified.) I feel a something drawing my feet, drawing me away from you. O, where are you, Jean? (She reaches out her arms and moves them blindly. Jean, in the utmost tenderness, brings them to his neck.)

Jean—Here I am, dear! If you cannot see as they see in the light of The World Above, you can still know that it is I, even by the self-same way you knew me in The Darker Realm. Put your hand on my face, if the light blinds your eyes, and then you will know.

(She lays her hand lightly on his brow. Then with a long sigh of bliss:)

Angelica—Ah! (A pause.) Yes, it is still you! I am still with you! (A pause. Jean sustains her strongly and tenderly as they move on into deeper water. Then their voices are heard from a little distance.) Are you there, dear Jean?

Jean—Here I am, Angelica, my beloved!

(The current flows strongly in and softly draws the two lovers onward. They pass out beneath the stone archway into the full, bright day. As they move from beneath the sharply-cut outline of the shadow and emerge into the glow of the level sunset rays, a halo of light seems to enwreathe the heads of youth and maiden, and their faces shine as if transfigured. The joyous welcoming voices come nearer—one can almost understand what they say! Jean and Angelica float together, buoyed safely by the current, out into the river. Some pleasure-barges pass very near, trailing garlands of flowers; the laughter of the rowers is heard, then the sweet sound dies along the rippling surface of the water. A fleet messenger-boat has put forth from the opposite shore and is seen to thread its way among the myriad river-craft; it approaches; it stops for a moment in mid-stream. The sun sets; floods of glory stream out over the city. Evening bells are heard chiming forth the strains of a triumphant hymn: